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The Russian Revolution: The First Year,

by
JOSEPH KING, M.P.



PRICE THREEPENCE.

Published by
THE UNION OF DEMOCRATIC CONTROL,
4-7, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street,
London, E.C.4.

April, 1918.

The Union of Democratic Control.

NOTE.

The following pamphlet is published by the Union of Democratic Control, because it is a valuable contribution to the discussion of the causes of war and means of its avoidance in future. The object of the Union in its pamphlets is to place at the disposal of the public ideas and information which may create a healthy and informed opinion. But it does not necessarily adopt as its own every statement or opinion therein contained. The five cardinal points are the only principles to which the members of the Union are collectively pledged.

The five cardinal points in the policy of the Union of Democratic Control are as follows:—

To formulate, and organise support for, such a policy as shall lead to the establishment and maintenance of an enduring peace. For this purpose, to advocate the following points, and to take any other action which the Council of the Union of Democratic Control may, from time to time, declare to be in furtherance of such policy.

1. No Province shall be transferred from one Government to another without the consent, by plebiscite or otherwise, of the population of such province.

2. No Treaty, Arrangement, or Undertaking shall be entered upon in the name of Great Britain without the sanction of Parliament. Adequate machinery for ensuring democratic control of foreign policy shall be created.

3. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain shall not be aimed at creating Alliances for the purpose of maintaining the Balance of Power, but shall be directed to concerted action between the Powers, and the setting up of an International Council, whose deliberations and decisions shall be public, with such machinery for securing international agreement as shall be the guarantee of an abiding peace.

4. Great Britain shall propose as part of the Peace settlement a plan for the drastic reduction, by consent, of the armaments of all the belligerent Powers, and to facilitate that policy shall attempt to secure the general nationalisation of the manufacture of armaments, and the control of the export of armaments by one country to another.

5.—The European conflict shall not be continued by economic war after the military operations have ceased. British policy shall be directed towards promoting free commercial intercourse between all nations and the preservation and extension of the principle of the open door.

The Russian Revolution:

The First Year.

By

JOSEPH KING, M.P.

LONDON

ST. CLEMENTS PRESS, LTD.,
Portugal Street, Kingsway, W.C.2.

FOREWORD.

This brochure describes The First Year of the Russian Revolution, and falls into six sections:—

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In attempting to recount this story I do not profess to make any revelations nor to give personal experiences. I have followed Russian affairs closely for years, and have Russian friends in various social circles and of widely different views. Believing that a true and connected story in outline should be set before the public, I have tried to state the facts rather than to criticise or prophesy. The facts as given here have been sifted out from many sources, and books and journals of various points of view have been drawn upon.

J. KING.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
March, 1918.

The Russian Revolution :

The First Year.

I.

RUSSIA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

was ruled by the House of Romanoff for 300 years. Coming to power when Russia (Muscovy) seemed likely to sink back into barbarism and insignificance, the Romanoffs by a succession of great sovereigns extended their frontiers till they possessed one-sixth of the land surface of the globe, ruled with absolute power 170,000,000 souls, possessed a domain of continuous territorial extent with every variety of climate and people, and with vast undeveloped mineral and other wealth. Thus in 1914 Russia appeared the great empire of the future.

To understand Russia to-day one must know a little of Russian history and character. The Romanoff line numbers sovereigns of real genius—Peter the Great, who brought ideas of western civilisation and an imperial future to his people; Catherine, who in cynical ambition and ruthlessness rivalled Frederick the Great of Prussia; Alexander the First, who alone of the monarchs opposing Napoleon showed real genius, imagination, and idealism. Russian Czars have by a stroke of their autocratic pen liberated the serfs, summoned the nations to Hague Conventions, and abolished vodka drinking. The genius shown by Russian monarchs is reflected in varied forms in the Russian people, which has embraced such contemporary giants as Kropotkin, Metchnikoff, and Tolstoy.

The Riddle of Russia

seemed to men of western civilisation the more baffling because Russia was in some ways so far behind the age. Its religious system was like Catholicism before the Reformation, and its Government that of the Roman Emperors in their decadent age. Yet for years past there has been a ferment. The intellectuals, students and savants, have discussed and preached advanced ideas of life and society. Amongst the working class, though to belong to a socialist society was an offence for which many have suffered lifelong deportation or death, the most radical opinions continued to gain ground. Meanwhile, a spiritual movement, seen in Tolstoy's writings and life, was dissolving the traditions of society more

widely and powerfully than Rousseau and Voltaire dissolved those of their time. Shall we see a more potent revolution than the French Revolution as the result? While the temper of the Russian people is as remote from Prussianism as is that of the Irish, the strange fact remains that Prussianism had, before the war, dominated Russian government and enslaved the Russian people as it had never done in Prussia. Peter the Great and his successors had called in Prussians as bankers, organisers, teachers, and officials, till German intellect largely ran the Government and business of Russia. The Russian bureaucracy was Prussian in origin and spirit, less efficient and more corrupt than across the frontier. Statesmanship and progressive ideas, which had been seen in his predecessors were absent from Nicholas II. That his régime was a

Reign of Terror

was widely acknowledged, but never seriously faced by the nations in which liberty was established. Facts were made known about Siberia, Russian prisons, the Jewish pogroms and Stolypin's "necktie"; that a Government living by such methods was no fit ally for, and might prove false to, Western democracies, was only stated by a few. It was never in the minds of the foreign diplomats and cosmopolitan financiers who wished to exploit Russian possibilities. The United States had indeed denounced the Treaty with Russia as a protest against Russian methods. A periodical, "Darkest Russia," appeared in London, recounting incredible tyranny; publication ceased when war began. But a few facts may be here stated. In the abortive revolution of 1905 over 26,000 paid their lives for their effort to be free—most executed without fair trial. Over 30,000 Jews were victims in one year's pogroms, some killed, more driven as beggars from their homes. Dr. Dillon says that assassination was practised with the connivance of members of the Government. The secret police (Okhrana) were licensed terrorists. In five years the Czarist courts sentenced 37,600 persons for political offences, of whom 31,000 went to penal servitude. By administrative order hundreds of thousands were sent to Siberia. Thousands of Jews, Intellectuals and Socialists fled the country to establish Russian colonies in Berlin, Vienna, Switzerland and London. These refugees carried on an underground propaganda, and were hotbeds of revolutionary leaders who returned later to a freer Russia.

The Responsibility for Russian Tyranny

must be shared by society in other civilised lands. The German Kaiser was understood to have been ready in 1905 to send German soldiers into Russia had the revolt gone near to overthrowing Czardom. A different, yet grave, burden lies on the financiers, who lent money to, or got concessions from, the Government. Allied statesmen supported these financiers and made treaties and

agreements without any attempt to influence the autocracy towards granting liberty or ending corruption. In 1906 the French Government made a loan to Russia, avowedly to support the Czar against revolution. In 1907 the British Government had its deal with Russia, dividing the carcass of Persia. The democratic Allies of Russia propped up, and never cared to purify their barbarous neighbour.

Japan and Russia

were drawing closer in 1914, though ten years before they had been at war. The relations of these two great Empires afford ground for the doctrine that wars are not due to hatred between people, but to capitalist and imperialist ambitions. Impelled by imperialistic ambition on both sides they had gone to war in February, 1904. The disgust, privations, humiliations and losses which Russia then suffered led to a revolutionary outbreak; it was suppressed with cruel bloodshed, but had to be followed by the grant of

The Duma (October, 1905).

The first Duma, or Parliament, was based on a wide franchise, and was an assembly of advanced opinions; it was dissolved on July 22, 1906, the Czar refusing to accept its demand for a Ministry responsible to it. The majority issued the Viborg manifesto, urging the refusal of recruits and taxes. The second Duma met in March, 1907, and, more advanced than the first, suffered on June 14 the arrest of fifty-five of its members by the Prime Minister, Stolypin. The Duma refused to sanction these arrests and was promptly dissolved. The third Duma, which outlived its term and the Czarism, was a strongly conservative body, secured by Stolypin's Edict, which completely transformed the electorate. When the war broke out in August, 1914, Russia was still an absolute autocracy, with nothing but the merest semblance of popular consultation. After two years of war, even the mild and conservative Duma was in danger of being suspended by a still more reactionary Czar. Without discussing the origin of the great European war, it is safe to say that the readiness of the bureaucratic and military chiefs in Russia (as in Germany also) to urge war on the Autocracy, and to greet its outbreak with enthusiasm, was not unconnected with internal conditions. There had been strikes, political in their origin, and demonstrations of workmen ruthlessly shot down. These shortly preceded the war; mobilisation was ordered by the Czar when Sir Edward Grey was pleading for delay and conciliation. Baron Rosen, formerly Russian Ambassador at Washington, has since stated his view of the outbreak of the war and subsequent events in Russia. His words are striking, as coming from one of the most experienced servants of the ex-Czar. Baron Rosen is an "aristocratic internationalist," a man of affairs, who lived in Petrograd through war and revolution, always a spectator, never an actor of the events. He says "I knew the war was coming as far back as 1912. Behind

the curtain of Russian secret diplomacy, war was being made inevitable by the rising tide of revolution from below. The Czar's Court knew that their only hope was to stave off revolution by setting their armies marching. . . . The Revolution was a national revolt of the Russian People against the war. The war was made by those who wanted to put down revolution, and therefore the revolution was made to put down the war." In these conditions, realised by more than the few who ventured to warn against them, in August, 1914, Russia went to war against Germany and Austria.

The popular theory in England, which it was almost as dangerous as high treason not to accept, was that Russia had been purified from incompetence and corruption since the Japanese War, that by reason of her alliance with republican France and democratic Britain, Russia had definitely joined the liberal and enlightened states of the world, and that Russia's geographical position, her gallant army and large military preparations, her immense resources of gold reserves, her superabundant food production, and her teeming population, men of the hardiest of peasant-type, made her invincible. By reason of her overwhelming weight, though slow in action, Russia was to be the steam-roller of the road to liberty—and Berlin! Warnings to a contrary effect by the wisest of statesmen were disregarded. Sir Charles Dilke had warned against reliance on Russia's support in any war, and had declared it to be one of the objects of his return to Parliament, in 1906, that he wished to prevent an Anglo-Russian alliance. But Press patriotism silenced wise statesmanship.

Early in 1915 there were significant signs of Russian national awakening against the

Corruption and Incapacity of Russian Government.

The Zemstvos, Provincial Councils, Municipalities, and even Sects, united in Congress, voiced the discontent and organised sections of the national effort. These bodies, with committees of business men and Labour leaders, took over such services as production of munitions, care of the sick and wounded, relief of refugees, and the providing for prisoners. They began with the support and co-operation of the Government. Later their success and patriotism raised suspicions that these bodies offered an alternative government to the bankrupt bureaucracy; they were suppressed. Even the Duma, elected as reactionary and subservient to the Czardom, now evolved a

Duma Progressive Block,

and demanded a stable Government of reliable Ministers acting with the legislative body, and a home policy which would preserve national unity and peace. The block demanded definite political reforms, including the return of those deported for offences, the autonomy of Poland, a change of policy towards Finland, abolition

of the restrictions on the Jews, freedom of the Press, and the right of association, especially for workmen's unions, etc. This movement led to a change of Prime Minister; Goremeykin, the new Premier, had reformers as his colleagues (Sazonoff, Bark, and General Polivanof); but the "dark forces" prevailed; the Duma was prorogued in November, 1915; ministerial changes from this point onwards were successive victories for reaction. Protests, whether from the Russian nation or enlightened opinion among the Allies, were disregarded. The British Ambassador, forsaking the rule which precludes an accredited Envoy from interfering in internal politics, ventured to protest to the Czar. It was a struggle of all that was hopeful and enlightened in Russia against the

"Dark Forces"

which included the bureaucracy, the pro-Germans (secret and avowed), the Court Camarilla with the notorious Rasputin, a religious libertine, who mesmerised the Czarina, and through her the Autocrat of all the Russias. The condition of that Russia on which the Allies hopes had been in 1914 so centred, was described by the Russian Ambassador in London, who said to a journalist: "An epidemic of madness is raging in Government circles at Petrograd." The Czar and his friends seem never to have had any idea of concession or conciliation. At the Russian New Year, 1917, Rasputin's long list of scandals and corruption had led to his murder. Excitement and indignation over this affair were intense. Yet the Czar then issued his Rescript to Pitirim, the Metropolitan of Petrograd, an ecclesiastic boon companion of Rasputin, a man of notorious evil life and an extreme reactionary. The Rescript, full of loathsome adulation and the old spirit of contempt for the nation's wishes, disgusted even those moderate men who were ready to suffer still if the end of the war might bring a change.

The Russian Army and Navy

were to play the decisive part in the coming Revolution. For years the Czarist methods were preparing them for this duty. The Russian Navy was recruited from the towns. Some degree of education and technical aptitude are needed for men on modern men-of-war. These town workers brought in, imbibed, and spread Socialist ideas. In the attempted revolt of 1905 the sailors had shown their spirit. In 1912 there had been revolutionary outbreaks in certain ships, leading to shooting and punishment of naval men. The large extent of these mutinous occurrences and the number of executions never appeared. When the Revolution came the sailors joined in from the first. When a second Revolution brought in Bolshevik Government, the navy again went over. Nine months of Revolution saw the ships of war really controlled by the Committees of Sailors on each ship. They sent their members to the

C.W.S.D. (Council of Workmen and Soldiers' Delegates). They elected their own officers, and revised or confirmed his orders. In most things the captain only now acted with his men's leave!

The Russian Army

saw a similar process in its ranks. Before the war, and up to March, 1917, Socialists and revolutionaries found the ranks of the army their best field for propaganda. After the Russian losses and retreats of 1915, the old army was largely wiped out. But the stories of cruelty, incapacity, and ill-treatment were there. The ranks were now filled with reservists, men with families and maturer minds, conscious of the corruption above them, and with domestic and social aims; they knew that their comrades had been sent to the trenches sometimes without rifles or ammunition. They did not need much persuasion to join the Revolution.

It has been said that in the ten years since the Russo-Japanese War a better tone and new efficiency had appeared in the

Officers of Army and Navy.

This was true of regimental and divisional commands. But no reform had touched the central bureaucracy nor the Petrograd War Ministry. The confessions of the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, at his trial in 1917 amply show this. The Russian Army administration remained unsound. Again, the Russian officers were, like the Prussians and unlike the French, taken from a higher social class than their men. They treated their men too often in the same brutal manner. This explains not only part of the readiness to join the Revolution, but also the murder of officers both in Army and Navy by their men when the Revolution came. Old scores were paid off, and officers who were suspected to be ready to join in reaction or counter-revolution were made to disappear. The number of such cases has been exaggerated. Both Kerensky and the Bolsheviki did their best to prevent these outrages and to punish their perpetrators. Soldiers and sailors were imprisoned and charged for these offences. No lynch law was tolerated.

News, which from early in the war came from Russia, raised growing doubts as to the value of Russian military efficiency and of her political wisdom. The military tides need not be here recalled. Though the campaigns in the Caucasus and Armenia saw great Russian advances against the Turks, though General Brussiloff entered Galicia, though Lemberg was taken, and in the summer of 1916 the Russian advances into Austrian territory induced Roumania to come into the war against her former allies, still the retreats and defeats of the Russian armies were on the whole so much greater than its advances or victories that, at the end of 1916, it was the common view in London and Paris that Russia must be written off as a serious fighting force. Russia's military failures

were sowing the seeds of distrust and disgust in place of that adulation of everything Russian which had seized the Allied peoples in August, 1914. The change of feeling was accelerated by

Russia's Political Follies.

Repeated stories were told in political circles both in London and Paris of the diplomacy of Russia, which caused grave apprehension, though not published in the Press or Parliament. At one time it was threats of making a separate peace; then came the demand that the Allies should guarantee to Russia the possession of Constantinople and the Straits after the war; the Gallipoli campaign, with its bitter losses, was the result of an urgent Russian demand; the Allies' troubles with Greece were explained by the Russian refusal to the Greeks of any gains, even if Greek armies fought for the Allies. Almost daily news from Russia alienated Allied sympathy. Persecution of the Jews and continued pogroms, an undiminished stream of deportations to Siberia, suppression of newspapers and political unions, continued contempt of a protesting Duma, soaring prices largely due to inflated currency, the unlimited issue of paper money, soldiers being paid in unnumbered notes like postage stamps, stories of profiteering and waste, disorganisation in public services, especially in railway transport, terrible lack of arms and equipment, whole regiments going into battle without rifles or with one rifle to every five men, the rapid changes of Ministers, each change marking growing reactionary influences and not unconnected with amazing stories of the unspeakable Rasputin, the circulation, in America especially, of detailed stories of atrocities against the Jews and in invaded districts, such follies as the immediate arrest and deportation to Siberia of patriotic socialist exiles returning to their native country, like the famous Bourtzeff; these stories, in spite of censorship and patriotic editing, became known in other countries. Messages from the correspondents of one or two well-informed newspapers in England ("Sunday Times," "Manchester Guardian," "Daily News," "Labour Leader," "Nation") prepared intelligent persons for violent repression or successful revolution. Amid this confusion, it seems certain that a separate peace with Germany was being arranged by the Czar or his Court party in secret negotiations at Stockholm. Thus opened the year 1917, when the British War Cabinet of Mr. Lloyd George, as one of its earliest acts, sent to Russia one of its members on a special mission. So

Lord Milner went to Russia,

where he remained several weeks. He returned on March 5, 1917. In "The Times," on March 6, within a week of the Revolution in Russia, was an official statement, in which Lord Milner paid tribute to the personal influence and hearty support of his Majesty the Czar, and declared that in Russia there was only one aim, to bring the war to a quick and successful conclusion. "All the members

of the mission were encouraged" (said Lord Milner). "About the war I could not find any difference of opinion whatever . . . there was no question of any fresh line of policy," etc. On the eve of the Revolution, which was being confidently foretold in Scandinavian newspapers, Lord Milner told the world that the loyalty of the Russian Government and people was safe and sound for the cause of the Allies!

II.

THE STORM WHICH BROKE ON 12th MARCH, 1917.

Whether through insufficient information, or misjudging the facts, the Allied Cabinets were unprepared and surprised. Four days before the food shortage had led to a decision of the Petrograd workers to down tools. On March 9 the trams ceased to run; processions went through the streets crying "We want bread"; the police organised barricades in the streets to stop the moving people; in one square, where orators began to declaim, the police drew sabres and charged; the first blood of the revolution flowed; meetings and processions, dispersed by Cossacks, re-formed elsewhere. The people took fresh confidence; committees were formed; leaders chosen. The Government prepared for the morrow by mounting machine-guns on roofs and at points of vantage. On March 10 the strike was general; shops all closed; many troops were at cross roads and on the bridges; the soldiers' barricades were rushed by the workmen; fighting became serious; then, by prior arrangement or sudden organisation, definite method was seen among the rioters. On March 11 the Czar's Ukase, suspending the Duma, appeared on the walls, and no newspapers were being printed. This worked up the whole population to rise against the Government; revolutionary songs and speakers were heard; what was first a riot was now a manifest revolution. The contagion was irresistible, and spread to the soldiers. The Duma continued to sit, disregarding the Czar's Ukase, with a sort of Provisional Government under the President, Rodzianko. The Czar's last Cabinet kept on issuing orders for repression and nothing else. But the reinforcements needed by the police were not forthcoming. The soldiers were driven by sympathy with their fellow citizens to forsake discipline.

The Revolution was Established

while the Law Courts went down in flames. The fortress of Peter and Paul surrendered. The Arsenal was sacked. Blood flowed as

the police agents and spies fell into the hands of their former victims, or the men serving the machine-guns on housetops were taken by the workers.

The Triumph of the Revolution

was seen in the self-surrender of the Ministers, in the orders issued by the Executive Committee formed at the Taurida Palace, the sitting place of the Duma, and in the tearing down of Imperial Eagles while soldiers paraded with the red flag.

When these events were happening in Petrograd the Czar was at Mohilef, the army headquarters. Galitzin, the Prime Minister, and Protopopof, the strong man and the evil genius of the Czar's last days of power, wired false accounts to the Czar, who hardened his heart and ordered stern repression. He was kept in the dark; then, too late, he was ready to grant a Constitution. He started in his train early on March 13 for Tsarkoyë-Selo. After various delays and changes of plan he was stopped at Pskof on the evening of the 14th. Here General Russky met him, told him the truth—that his authority and government were at an end. Soon telephones to Petrograd and telegrams to the army leaders Evert and Brussilof showed that there was only one course open.

The Abdication of the Czar

was contained in a document handed to him, the work of the members of the Duma who at first served for a Government. It named the Grand Duke Michael, the Czar's brother, as successor. But the men who drew and presented this document were not the real revolution. It was from the first clear that no member of the Romanoff family could possibly succeed to the throne. The arrest of the Czar and his family soon followed. Conscious of the popular feeling, the Grand Duke Michael refused the Crown. All the Romanoffs were soon regarded as suspects, if not enemies of the State. They disappeared. Not even the moderate Constitutionalists, to whom a monarchy with parliamentary government was the ideal, remained true to the House of Romanoff. The true spirit of the Revolution and of the Russian people was increasingly Republican. The Russian Revolution was not created by the Liberals or by any Constitutional reformers. It was a sudden effort of the working classes, supported by a discontented and ill-treated soldiery. Years of repression and increasing severity of persecution, the corruption and disorganisation of the army and public services, the cruel neglect of the soldiers, the belief that the Czar was negotiating for a separate peace with the enemy by a secret mission to Stockholm, the increased cruelty practised towards the Jews, the massacres which had been ordered by the Czar in territories invaded by his armies and in distant parts of his own empire (many thousand Khirghiz Nomads had been slaughtered or

driven to die of famine in the forests, as Kerensky disclosed in the Duma), and, finally, the holding up of food coming into Petrograd, whether designed to bring the revolutionary leaders to light, to seize them and suppress their cause, or to induce the populace to accept the impending peace—these explain the outburst. The first

News of the Revolution

was given to the British public by a statement on March 15, 1917, made by Mr. Bonar Law in the House of Commons. How little the true facts were grasped appeared from his statement—(a) that the sailors and soldiers had joined the Duma; (b) that the discontent was not against the Government for carrying on the war, but for not carrying it on with efficiency and energy. When, on March 22, a formal motion was made in Parliament of congratulation to the Russian people, Mr. Bonar Law not only spoke as if the Russian Duma was the cause and symbol of the revolution, and of the late Czar as having been for three years our loyal ally, and of his “burden, which had proved too heavy.” On March 19 Mr. Lloyd George stated that the revolution was “due to discontent at the inefficiency of the Government in its conduct of the war,” and that “it is satisfactory to know that the new Government has been formed for the express purpose of carrying on the war with renewed vigour,” promising “even closer and more effective co-operation between the Russian people and its Allies.” Indeed, any other view than that the Russian Revolution was a respectable concern of superior patriots, and sure to lead to more successful warfare, was considered unpatriotic. Really, as everyone now knows, the Duma had discouraged the rising; the few members who took part in the Provisional Government subsequently only came out of their hiding when the complete collapse of bureaucracy and autocracy was secured by the army’s adhesion to the revolution.

Later, it was to appear that even the “patriotic” Imperialist Cadets were willing to do what the Ukrainians did in February, 1918, and make a separate German peace.

III.

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION

saw not only the complete collapse of the Romanoffs, but also the imprisonment of the members of the Czar’s Ministries, the removal of the hated police, who were sent into the Army at the front, the formation of a Provisional Government of Ministers, who were at first partly members of the Duma, and soon had to give way to more Radical and Socialist successors. Thousands of exiles returned from Siberia and abroad. The Allied Governments sent

special missions to encourage and advise the Russians on their newly-gained liberty, and to urge continuance of the war. Even more significant were the cessation of active fighting on the Russian front, the absence of any counter-revolution, and the universal demand that the future form of Government must be Republican. Unhonoured and unregretted, the Duma had ceased to exist. Its members were for the most part alien to the dominant spirit of the revolution. The real force which governed the country was the

Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates,

which represented the Army, the Navy, and the working classes of the towns. This Council (or Soviet), the C.W.S.D., had Social Democratic opinions. The adhesion of the peasant population, at one time expected to prove a steadying or even reactionary power, came gradually into line with the other workers. Throughout the summer and early autumn of 1917 the course of revolutionary government, though marked by frequent change of Ministries, seemed intelligible to and in sympathy with the Western democracies. It looked forward to elections on a democratic franchise, with adult male and female suffrage, and on the basis of Proportional Representation and the party list (or Belgian) method; the Assembly thus elected was to decide on the form of the new Constitution.

The Features of the Revolution

must be constantly remembered, in which Russian democracy differs vitally from the Western type. The first is that Russian Socialist working-class aims are essentially international. As an acute observer has written of their leaders: "Their Internationalism amounts to colour-blindness; they see and admit no difference between the various Capitalist Governments; they had always opposed any co-operation with middle-class elements. They advocated the dictatorship of the wage-earning proletariat. For this creed they had faced Siberia, exile, and the Czar's 'necktie.'" The secret and persecuted Socialist Societies, with propaganda in workshops, Army and Fleet, going back for many years, had been preachers of the Gospel of Karl Marx. While the average man in England and France would argue "make my country victorious and it will give justice and democracy to workers in all lands," the Russian Marxian would say "Capitalism causes wars, let workers in all lands join hands and secure Peace and Justice by common effort." The Marxian conclusion is to fight for Internationalism, and to let Nationality come to its right as a result. The British view, as expressed in the orthodox ordinary patriot, is to fight for Nationality and let Internationalism come in after.

The other distinctive and misunderstood feature of Russian democracy is

The Soviet.

Soviets (Councils) are Committees which are constantly referring to the persons who set them up for approval or correction. Their members are liable to recall or re-election at any time. These Councils correspond to the ancient forms of Russian society. The village community, the Artels or gangs for labour, the co-operative groups are part of the life and social structure of Russia. Soviets maintain the closest possible touch with the people who elect them. A Congress of Soviets which supported Kerensky one day might the next day withdraw that support, not from being bribed with German gold, but from a real change in the situation which they reflect. The Soviet system, equally with the enthusiasm for internationalism, has been a mystery to the British Press and politicians, who have so largely failed to understand the revolution.

The First Eight Months of the Revolution

showed a confusion of aims and methods. But it is not hard now to see how things went. When the Duma failed to control and lead the nation, the power passed to the organisation which had sprung up as in the night—the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates (the C.W.S.D.). On March 13, 1917, the Executive Committee of the Duma had issued an appeal to the nation to help in forming a new Government. The C.W.S.D. issued another appeal to the entire population for support, urging also that local Committees in the various districts should take in hand the direction of local affairs. Though on March 15 the two bodies coalesced in a Ministry of National Defence, yet the Duma Committee was bourgeois, capitalist, and militarist, and the C.W.S.D. was proletarian, socialist, and pacifist. In these next eight months there followed five Ministries. These changes were not surprising, since there was a strong desire to remain true to the Western Allies, and also a burning wish for an early peace. Again, while the bourgeois, in many cases, wanted to make the Revolution lead to more trade and financial opportunities, most of the active elements in the Revolution were socialist and anti-capitalist. Yet, again, there were those to whom nationalist solutions of the war were alone satisfactory, while the internationalist view of State relations prevailed in the workers and in large sections of the fighting forces. These eight months of divisions and doubts were followed by the Bolshevik rising in November. This first phase of the Revolution produced one heroic figure,

Kerensky,

a lawyer, who had been born in the Caucasus, famous as an advocate in political trials, in which he had defended men against bureau-

cratic prosecutions. Kerensky had been leader of the Labour Party in the third Duma. There he had been strong in exposing Czarist cruelty and bureaucratic incapacity. He now aimed at reconciling the Revolution to the Western Allies. Amid changes of Ministry, threats and dangers, disappointed of support on which he thought he could rely, as popular orator, Prime Minister, Commander in Chief and Leader of Revolution, Kerensky struggled on. When just a month old, the Revolution proclaimed its altered war aims (April 11, 1917), and in the proclamation of Prince Lvoff, then President of the Council, renounced imperialistic objects, and, whilst loyally desiring to fight on with its Allies, Russia demanded no annexations and no indemnities, but the rights of nations to decide their own destiny. Kerensky's policy was to continue in the Alliance against Germany; whether under Allied pressure or native pride, this policy compelled the Russians to make a vigorous offensive. The Russian armies in Galicia advanced two days; this was followed by the Germans resuming operations and occupying the great port of Riga. The leadership of Kerensky, who seemed to Western democrats indispensable, might have had the support of the Western Allies had they realised that Russia was too disorganised and weakened by losses and ruin of the old social order to continue any real fight.

The Economic Collapse

of Russia had helped to bring about the Revolution. In Petrograd in March, 1917, not only was there grave shortage of bread, but prices had soared and were still soaring. The price of bread was five times what it had been when war began; herrings had risen 767 per cent.; metal wares 1,900 per cent.; soap nearly 800 per cent.; wood for fires 1,100 per cent. The cost of the war, due largely to waste, incompetence and reverses, had been crushing; in the three years of war to August, 1917, war credits amounted to 41,392,000,000 roubles (or £4,000,000,000 at the normal rate of exchange). In foreign loans there had been raised 8,061 million roubles, of which Russian authorities give £700,000,000 as raised in England. All foreign exchanges had long been greatly against Russia. The Government printing presses were turning out paper money in literally unnumbered amounts. With industries declining, raw materials not available, and famine threatening, it meant to the people that the war must end. This conviction was confirmed by the patent fact that while the limited railway services were employed in feeding a large army at the front, the want in Petrograd and the North could not be relieved, because rolling-stock was not available to bring corn and other goods from Siberia and Southern Russia. As Kerensky said, "Russia was worn out." Those who condemn Russia for not fighting on still should inquire whether they are not demanding impossibilities.

In reply to Kerensky's request for a re-statement of Peace

and War Aims, each Ally made reservations and distinctions. Even the American Note was vague, though President Wilson from the first made a sincere effort to show sympathy and guidance to the Revolution. So it happened that, whilst Ministries fell, after an average life of six weeks, Kerensky remained and formed another. His eloquence, resource, and programme failed, his power declined. With Tereschenko, the Ukrainian millionaire, sugar magnate and Duma deputy, as his constant colleague at the Russian Foreign Office, he remained in touch with the Allied Governments. One sign of this was the renewed supply of munitions to Russia from America, Japan, and Britain. Another sign was the Military Convention with Britain, under which Russians here were conscripted into the British Army. Kerensky also encouraged the idea of autonomy for the Ukrainians, the Finns, and the other Russian sub-nationalities, and their future within a United States of Russia.

Kerensky's Army Policy

was to reorganise the soldiers, and to inspire a new discipline and efficiency. The Revolution, as one of its first acts, on March 20 abolished the death sentence for soldiers. Kerensky for some months continued this. He allowed those soldiers who wished to return home to leave their commands. He relied on a volunteer army. His wish for liberty, or to meet the soldiers' wish for liberty, induced his "Soldiers' Charter," which gave to soldiers privileges not enjoyed by any other army. Its first words were: "All serving in the Army enjoy the rights of citizens, but while on duty they must strictly conform to the demands of discipline." Officers have asked whether this principle did not render old ideas of discipline impossible. But after the Revolution could anyone restore the old order?

General Kornilov

had been Commander-in-Chief of the Petrograd garrison when the Revolution began. A Siberian Cossack by birth he became the hope of the Cadet party and of all Imperialists. Many, both in Russia and among the Allies, hoped that Kornilov would lead a counter-revolution and restore the monarchy. His authority with the Cossacks, his attempts to restore the military position against the Germans, his securing from Kerensky the restoration of the death penalty in the army, his proposal to extend it to railwaymen, his suppression of political propaganda, his behaviour and speech at the Moscow Conference in August, his march on Petrograd in September, raised extravagant hopes that a military dictator had appeared in Russia, under whom Russia would be a fighting ally stronger than ever. But it was clear to the Russian soldiers that to follow Kornilov's lead must end the Revolution; this would have

meant at once civil war. His soldiers fraternised with the revolutionary forces sent against Kornilov; he was imprisoned; and the left wing of the Revolution was stronger than ever.

The Stockholm Conference.

was proposed, as a revival of the old International. It was to summon working-class representatives from all countries. So German and Russian, French and Austrian workers would have sat together in an attempt to find a basis for peace. It was intended that representatives from the Allies should first have deliberated together to find their common ground. This prospect gave Kerensky still another chance when the Russian offensive of July failed. It was the last hope of keeping the Russian Revolution out of the control of the extreme Internationalists. These, the Maximalists or Bolsheviks, opposed Stockholm, because the Socialist parties (or the majorities which spoke for the Socialists) in Germany, France, and Britain, unlike those of Italy, had allied themselves with their national Governments in voting war credits. To the Bolsheviks this meant joining with the Imperialistic national Governments against International Socialism. The position was clearly seen and urged by Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Labour Member of the British War Cabinet. He had been on a prolonged mission to Russia. When, through the action of the Allied Governments, the Stockholm proposal was defeated, Mr. Henderson resigned on August 11, 1917. The Bolsheviks had been in a minority at first, both in the cities, the country, and the Soviets; their papers had been suppressed; their leaders had been forced into hiding. But from this point they steadily grew; their ideas captured the Soviets; the universal need of peace and the failure of Kerensky's last hope brought the Soviets round. It was through the action of the Soviets, always the real masters of the situation, that Kerensky fell; on November 6 the second revolution placed the Bolsheviks in power, with Lenin and Trotsky as the leaders of the nation

The Lack of Accord with the Western Allies

was latent in the Revolution in March, and was manifest in November, when the Bolsheviks took control. A nation with over 90 per cent. illiterates, which less than two generations ago was a nation of serfs, which is mainly peasant and poor, which had suffered invasion, famine, and economic collapse, which had just shaken itself free of the cruelties and oppressions of Czardom, neither could nor would continue the war. In wartime the Governments of most countries control their citizens more powerfully than in peace, and are themselves less controlled. In Russia, the people, through the Revolution, have gained a new freedom, and through the Soviets they control their Government as in no other country. The Russian Soviets not only make the Government as a General Election makes

the Government in Britain, but also keep in power or destroy the Government as a Parliamentary majority gives or withholds confidence in the Government of the day. It is true that the immense Empire of Russia had fallen asunder, some provinces taken by the enemy, others proclaiming independence, others looking towards State autonomy or Home Rule. But the Russian idea of national as well as of international politics supposes local units, determining their own bounds and conditions, yet in close contact and understanding with one another. Faced with these facts, why have not the Allied Governments recognised the Republic of Soviets as the Government of Russia? Because their unimaginative diplomats and their Press (perhaps by force of censorship and loyalty) have failed to see that the young giants of Russia, freed from their chains, could only be led if understood, and could not be forced into the mind and manners of the West.

The Failure of the Allied Diplomacy

—or, rather, of the Allies as a whole—in face of revolutionary Russia is patent. This is admitted by all, especially by newspapers usually supporting the Government and the war. As soon as the Bolshevik victory became complete it was universally apparent. The following quotations might be multiplied:—

“Very different would have been the march of events if the Western Allies of Russia had shown more sympathy with the Provisional Government and a better comprehension of their difficulties.”—*Daily Chronicle*.

“Our Foreign Office has failed completely in Russia to meet the people.”—*Evening Standard*.

“We have given Germany the opportunity of falsely posing as a Moderate to the too innocent Russian people. . . . This is one of the chief failures of Allied diplomacy in this war.”—*Westminster Gazette*.

“A colossal ignorance and levity have marked our policy with regard to revolutionary Russia from the first day to the last.”—*Manchester Guardian*.

Sternest and most unanswerable of all condemnations was

President Wilson's Judgment

(December 4, 1917), that if the Western Powers had so presented their war aims as to have had them “made plain at the very outset the sympathy and enthusiasm of the Russian people might have been once and for all enlisted on the side of the Allies, suspicion and distrust swept away, and a real and lasting union of purpose effected. And three months later it was reported from Washington, apparently on high authority, that President Wilson “still unquestionably holds to the opinion that the Revolution is

the one single great gain to civilisation thus far resulting from the war, regardless of how black present prospects in Russia appear." The President of the U.S.A. takes long views, which cannot be brushed aside as unreasonable.

IV.

THE BOLSCHEVIK GOVERNMENT

succeeded to the Revolution's inheritance in November, 1917, after eight months of coalitions and changes. The Bolschevik advent was no sudden success of a well-timed plot, no violent effort of a conspiracy without popular backing. It was the sequence of events. Its early fall was at once foretold by wilful misrepresentation or ignorant misunderstanding. But the fall did not come. In spite of immense difficulties and defeats, it persists. The relations between revolutionary Russia and the Allies appeared hopelessly ruined as weeks went by without the prophesied collapse of the Bolsheviki, while the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations began and proceeded. It was characteristic of the ignorance and levity of Allied policy that so many chose to regard the Bolsheviki as bought with German gold. To understand the injustice of this accusation we should know a little of the personality of Lenin and Trotsky.

Lenin,

the Prime Minister of the Bolschevik Government, is Vladimir Illitch Oulianoff. Born of a noble family, he became a lawyer after passing through the University. He helped to found the first social democratic organisation in Russia; then he was imprisoned in Siberia, and during the revolutionary days of 1905 edited the first Socialist paper in Petrograd. His life since then had been lived in exile. In Cracow when the war broke out, he was arrested by the Austrians, and later expelled to Switzerland, remaining there till the revolution in March, 1917, when occurred

His Return to Russia through Germany.

This fact has been constantly remembered against him by those who have sought grounds to abuse him as pro-German. The facts, however, are simply these:—In March, 1917, a number of Russian political refugees met with difficulties created by the French and British Governments, who prevented their return to Russia. Certain Swiss Socialists then made arrangements with the German Government for their free return by way of Germany on certain conditions: that (a) any refugees independent of creed or opinions might go in the party; (b) they were accompanied by a Swiss

Socialist; (c) the railway carriages were closed through Germany; and (d) no German official communicated with the refugees. In any case, it is quite false that Lenin personally had German favours or support on his return. Ardent supporters of the war and supporters of the Kerensky policy shared the journey with him.

Trotsky,

like Lenin, has risked his life and suffered imprisonment for his faith. He took part in the Revolution of 1905; sent to Siberia, he escaped, to settle in Vienna in 1907. There he wrote "Russia in the Revolution," and became famous as publicist to the Socialists of Austria and Germany. On outbreak of war in 1914 Trotsky came to Paris, and there edited a Russian newspaper strongly anti-Czar. On this paper being suppressed and himself banished, Trotsky tried to enter Switzerland, but was refused admission at the request of the French Government. He entered Spain, was imprisoned there, and released to go to U.S.A. In March, 1917, immediately the Revolution had succeeded, he took ship for Russia, but was taken from the vessel by a British warship, placed in a camp at Halifax, N.S., with interned German sailors, and charged with being a German agent. His Socialist agitation there amongst the Germans and the protests from Russia against his detention were followed by his release. He returned to Russia, where the public were told that he had received German money, the fact being that German brewery workers in Milwaukee had entrusted him with a collection for Russian victims of Czardom. On return to Petrograd he published a pamphlet describing his experiences, with biting invective against all Imperialist Governments.

Lenin and Trotsky

in their constant attack on Imperialist and Capital warfare were in a minority till late in 1917, but continued agitating in Russia for an immediate and general peace without annexations. They opposed the idea of reliance upon the Western Democracies, which to them were Capitalist and therefore Imperialist. When the Russian offensive failed in July and the proposal to meet the German Socialists at Stockholm became the policy of Kerensky and the Soviets,

The Maximalists

(as the party of Lenin was called) bitterly attacked the policy of Stockholm. They had denounced the mass of German Social Democrats as false to the doctrines of Marx, as men who, by having voted credits and fighting for their national government, had pledged themselves to Imperialism. Failure of the Allies to understand and support Kerensky, failure of the Russian July

offensive, failure to secure a revision of their War Aims at a common conference, failure to bring about the united action of Labour at the Stockholm Conference, with increasing food shortage and army disorganisation, brought the C.W.S.D. (Council of Workers and Soldiers' Delegates) and the Peasants' Delegates into line on the side of the Maximalists. From this time the Soviet was the C.W.S.P.D. (Council of Workers, Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates). In October Kerensky met the Provisional Parliament which he had set up to bridge the interval before the electors could elect an Assembly. His critics declared that this body was a selected assembly, picked and nominated by Kerensky, of men likely to support him. If so, it is significant that it only gave him a majority of twenty out of 400 votes, with more than twenty abstentions. Kerensky's policy had miscarried. When Mr. Bonar Law announced that

The Paris Allied Conference

would discuss solely the prosecution and not the aims of the war, Kerensky's power was gone. The German Reichstag had in July passed its Peace resolution; the Kaiser had twice been forced to change his Chancellor; Austria showed signs of internal weakening; the Pope had launched his Peace Note on August 1; its policy of disarmament and arbitration had been accepted by the Central Powers; Germany had made a private approach through M. Briand offering to evacuate Belgium, Alsace, and Italian territories. Kerensky had proclaimed Russia worn out and immediate peace essential. The Maximalists declared, against Kerensky's policy, that it was the Western Powers as much as the Central Powers who believed in militarism and were prolonging the war.

The Constituent Assembly

with its earlier hopes, had not been elected. Nominations for this body had been sent in by October. It was to be elected on a democratic franchise of men and women by the party list method of Proportional Representation. But when the elections were held the Bolschevik policy had carried the people. The lists put before the voters submitted lists of candidates which were out of date. It met in January, 1918, but represented a phase of the Revolution now ancient history. The Bolschevik Government dissolved the newly-elected Assembly, proclaimed the authority and power of the Executive Committee of the Soviets, and Russia's first revolutionary elected Parliament died at birth. The Council of Soviets reigned in its stead.

The Bolsheviks, their policy, and achievements were from the first misunderstood, and have been misrepresented by a persistent

Anti-Bolschevik Press Campaign

in and outside Russia. They were at first denounced as Pacifists, therefore pro-Germans; then as doctrinaires; later as Jews, madmen,

bloodthirsty anarchists, robbers, criminals; then as autocrats and despots, militarists, and anti-Germans; Russian ex-noblemen and possible allies with Clemenceau and the Republic of China. Only a few journals have admitted the truth, that they were efficient administrators and able negotiators. Mr. A. Ransome, Petrograd correspondent of the "Daily News," returning to Russia after three months in England, wrote, December 31, 1917, that "the present Labour Government is extremely efficient, energetic and decisive, though faced by the noisy opposition of the privileged classes, who are unable to make a Government of their own, and are doing all they can to shake the Government by means of sabotage and libel. The city is more orderly than it had been for months before the Bolsheviki took control." Col. W. B. Thompson, of the U.S.A. Army, declared on January 13, 1918, that the Bolsheviki had "maintained a most surprising degree of order in Russia . . . in Petrograd, during the first month of the November Revolution. I can say from my personal observation there was better order than at any other time during my four months' stay" (September to December, 1917). Col. Thompson also stated that Kerensky might have waged successful war against Germany if the Cadets, Milhiukof's party, had not lied about him, done everything to destroy his influence, and betrayed him. Col. Thompson is a rich American banker! Many other testimonies show that the Bolsheviki policy was efficient and restoring the country to law and order. Indeed, this is implied in what Sir George Buchanan, the returning British Ambassador, stated at Stockholm on January 13, that "the Bolsheviki had attained such a position that nobody can overthrow them at present."

The Power of the Bolsheviki

has relied on the national organisation of the Soviets. Their energy, prompt actions, and radical ideas began to produce out of chaos and uncertainty a new order, promising social rejuvenation. Food was commandeered and brought to the towns; the Peasants parted now with stores retained before, accepting the

Bolshevik Land Policy

in the spirit of the Russian proverb, "God made the Land for those who will work it." Lands of the Church, the Court, and large landed estates are now for the Peasants to work and rural Soviets to administer. The small peasant proprietor system of France, involving absolute property and harmful subdivision, is far removed from the notions and practice of the Russian peasantry. Communal rather than private ownership of land is the Russian ideal.

In industrial undertakings the control and management passed to the workmen. Co-operation between the workers with the masters of industry (not dissimilar in spirit and aim to that advocated by the Whitley Report for Britain) was carried out.

Russian Co-Operative Societies

comprise at least 20,000 distributing "Co-ops." in Russia and millions of members. Thwarted and suppressed by Czardom, they developed rapidly under Kerensky, who gave them special privileges. At first they were a strong force against the Bolsheviki, who in turn have favoured and let alone the Co-operators. Bolshevik policy towards all other capitalists who did not submit to the control of their workmen was "to leave the *bourgeois* only their slippers." The great Co-operative Banking Concern, the Moscow-Narody Bank, continues while the other Banks passed into a State monopoly. Artels are being formed to work the national forests: "the working of the forests by the people themselves demands that all workers concerned should close their ranks, and organise themselves into Forest-Working Artels, further combining these into Unions and thus laying the foundation for a proper and co-ordinated working of the forests." In February, 1918, the organ of Russian co-operators spoke of the favourable condition then prevailing for the growth of co-operation.

The Bolshevik State Bank

was founded by taking over the assets and businesses of most of the Banks of Russia. The early days of Bolshevik rule found the Banks financing counter-revolutionary work, and declining to assist the Government. The directors, managers, and staffs of the expropriated Banks refused the new conditions of service. The Bank doors were closed. Then a new set of officials and a unified State Bank took their place.

Thus Co-operation, State ownership, and total elimination of the capitalist profiteer are aimed at. Later the Bolsheviks declared the annulment of foreign loans and obligations. Their policy of repudiation of State debts, tried often by small and backward States, is already in part defeated by the German peace. Yet the financial and economic position of Russia may be repeated in other lands. Who will predict to-day the future of Labour or of Capital anywhere?

The Class Struggle

of Proletarians against the propertied classes was first announced eighty years ago by British Chartists, elaborated by Marx and Engels, accepted as the basis of Continental Socialism and proclaimed by Trotsky in his book "The War and the International" (October, 1914). This doctrine has become actual in Russian policy. Similarly, in foreign policy Lenin and Trotsky put forward

Class Truce, Union Sacrée, Burgfrieden,

peace between the proletarian workers, who should take their proper place after the downfall of Capitalism and the defeat of

Imperialism. A genuine peace and a true League of Peoples is only possible on the basis of the International. Faithful to this theory, which appeared madness to the Governments of the world, they dismissed the Russian Consuls, Ambassadors, Attachés, and others in foreign lands, appointed mostly by the Czar, who refused to obey their directions, and they appointed Ambassadors not accredited to foreign Courts, but to the peoples abroad. These were, of course, ignored and thwarted in their missions. When in December, 1918, the Bolsheviki proposed a Peace Conference and announced, not by diplomatic notes, but by wireless messages addressed "to all" of the people everywhere, that after a week's delay they would ask for an armistice with a view to a general peace of all nations, they received no response from any Government. Were they in a position to negotiate? or to achieve any peace short of absolute surrender at discretion? They would try.

Was it a mistake that this offer "to all" to enter into negotiations for peace was ignored by the Allies? No doubt the argument weighed with them that labour unrest, extreme war weariness, internal divisions, and exhausted fighting forces were felt as never before in Germany and Austria, that Turkey was being driven back in Palestine and Mesopotamia, and that the German alliance still held unbroken lines on the West, and had recently driven the Italians far behind their frontiers. On the other hand, America was making huge preparations, but not yet exerting a tenth of her prospective power in the field. Moreover, Russia was herself not united; there were armed revolts against the Bolsheviki in Siberia, in Cossack country, the Ukraine, and southern towns. Accounts sent out from neutral countries or capitalistic sources in Russia magnified the importance of these risings and depreciated the Bolshevik power. A speedy Bolshevik collapse was still prophesied and hoped for. Such anticipations were finally dispelled by Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador, who on returning to London in the middle of January declared that no change in Russia was to be expected in the near future, and the Soviets will still be the holders of power.

The Attitude of the Allies

was as laid down by the British Ambassador. He had already, on December 9, 1917, made a statement to Petrograd pressmen, dignified in tone, towards the Russian people, warm in generous sentiments, and said to have been drawn up by the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Balfour. It admitted the right of Russia to make a separate peace, but complained of negotiations being opened with the enemy without previous consultation with the Allies. It spoke of the "principles higher than treaty rights . . . principles fully recognised by the Council of People's Commissaries . . . those of a democratic peace which accords with those of smaller and weaker nationalities, which repudiated the idea of extracting plunder out

of conquered enemies under the name of war indemnities, or of incorporating in great empires the territories of reluctant populations." It well urged that it is "with the German autocracy and not with the German people that negotiations for an armistice are being conducted . . . the Allies are ready as soon as a stable Government is constituted and recognised by the Russian people as a whole, to examine with their Government the aims of the war and possible conditions of a just and durable peace." From this date the Russian Government has not been recognised by the Allies. Russia has revolved on an orbit apart.

Bolshevik Foreign Policy

marks a complete break with the old diplomacy. The aim, spirit and methods of Lenin as head of the Soviet in Petrograd, and Trotsky as Foreign Commissary at Brest-Litovsk in their peace negotiations were novel. How easy, then, to misunderstand and misrepresent them! Their aim was to obtain (1) a general peace resting on the will of the peoples, and (2) a self-determination for the nationalities whose lands and liberties had been outraged by imperialist militarism. Their spirit was to appeal frankly to the public, over the heads of generals and plenipotentiaries, to the workers and fighters. Their methods were publicity and propaganda. The armistice on the Russian front which they obtained was to admit of the fraternising of the troops, the dissemination of leaflets and journals, and facilities for trading, and especially the discussions of the negotiating parties were to be public. In this spirit, when Trotsky and his companions met the Germans they shook hands with them and talked in familiar way, as much with the orderlies and other men in attendance as with von Kühlmann and Czernin. The

Brest-Litovsk Negotiations

were prolonged, a long fight of Russian Socialism against German Machtpolitik. At the first meeting (December 25, 1917) the Russian proposals were for a general peace, with referenda to decide the allegiance of occupied territories, compensation for the devastated districts from a general fund contributed to by all the belligerents, and no economic war after the war. These terms are all included in the Labour War Aims of the Allied Socialists who met in London two months later, and agreed on a common policy for peace. Trotsky from the first demanded that German soldiers were not to be withdrawn from the Russian front for service elsewhere. His object was to make clear and to enforce his demand for a general peace. Whether the German Military Command observed this condition, which they accepted, is more than doubtful. Trotsky, moreover, made it known that if through her weakness an unsatisfactory peace were forced on Russia it would be regarded as a truce only till conflict could be renewed. The German reply

was that they had no wish to rob independent States, and that in occupied territories the people should themselves decide their fate. But how? Trotsky demanded the withdrawal of every German soldier, so that the populations invaded might be free to vote as they wanted. Of course, the Germans declined this. This first fundamental difference led to an adjournment. Trotsky returned to Petrograd, and in a public speech denounced Germany's "hypocritical peace proposals." In this first phase Trotsky drew from the German and Austrian Ministers agreement to the formula "no annexations and no indemnities." The repercussion of these events was great; the Junkers were alarmed and indignant in Prussia; and Ludendorff tendered his resignation as a protest. Later came the great political strike in Berlin. In London Mr. Lloyd George restated to the Trade Union Conference the Allied war aims on January 5, 1918. In Vienna was also a strike for peace. These events can all be traced to Trotsky's daring policy. When negotiations were resumed it was to wrangle over the freedom of self-determination of conquered lands. Germany evidently meant to hold what she had seized. German offers to withdraw some of the troops and to establish a native police were rejected. The negotiations were again adjourned for some days. There had now arisen the question of the Ukraine, which had proclaimed independence of Russia; her position was discussed and her plenipotentiaries took part in the Conference; but Trotsky protested that the anti-Bolshevik representatives of the Ukrainian Rada could not speak for the Ukraine population. Again an adjournment took place. The novelty, confusion, and complication of these negotiations baffle any attempt at a clear, concise account. Yet the Bolshevik policy was clear and consistently maintained throughout. Trotsky stood for a general peace based on social revolution, a peace of peoples not of diplomacy, the self-determination of nationalities and no annexations or indemnities by force of arms. Trotsky in all these weeks had shown himself a foe

Irreconcilable to German Militarism.

He would sign no peace with Germany, but would cease war, disbanding the Russian Army. This was the position when negotiations for peace failed, and the Germans announced the armistice at an end. The German Armies advanced once more. The Prussian mailed fist secured what parleying could not obtain—a treaty forced on Russia after struggles, appeals, delays, and protests. By violation of the armistice terms, and cynical German disregard of the assurances that no annexations and no indemnities were intended, a cruel peace was imposed on Russia.

The position in Russia was that the old régime had disappeared. The liberal intelligenzia and bourgeoisie were discredited, and were devoting their efforts to encouraging sabotage and internal discontent against the Socialists. The people everywhere were suffering unexampled privations and hardships from

which peace alone afforded the only relief. The Soviet was still in command, full of energy and alone possessed of a definite policy. So the

Peace with Germany

was accepted. Yet not without division of opinion within the Soviet ranks, and the resignation of Trotsky as Foreign Commissary. The terms of the Treaty of Peace included, among other conditions, that (1) Russia shall surrender all her border lands; Esthonia, Lithuania, Courland, Poland, Riga, and the Moon Islands are evacuated to Germany; (2) £300,000,000 must be paid, as equivalent of the damage done by Russian troops which invaded German and Austrian land in 1914-1916; this is merely a "disguised indemnity," and a cynical disregard alike of German diplomatic promises and the Reichstag resolution of July; Liberal organs in Germany have protested against it; (3) the recent Russian annulment of State loans is not to hold against German holders of Russian debts; this may mean that French and other holders of these obligations may be induced to sell them to Germans; (4) parts of the Caucasus comprising Armenia and the provinces of Batoum and Kars are returned to Turkey; (5) the commercial Treaty of 1904 is revived, giving German trade special opportunities for peaceful penetration; (6) the demobilisation of the Russian Army is to proceed at once; and (7) free passage to be granted to Persia and Afghanistan for German commerce; this would secure a new route to the East for German trade, replacing the Bagdad Railway route which has been lost by British conquests in Mesopotamia. While the ratification of this treaty was pending, the German Armies continued to advance. Petrograd was threatened. The German excuse was that appeals for order and intervention came from Russia suffering from the existing anarchy and terror. The truth cannot be obscured that Militarism and Capitalism were in league against Internationalism and Socialism. Germany has destroyed Russia as a great Power. Russia remains a Socialist State.

V.

THE COLLAPSE OF RUSSIA AS A GREAT POWER

is now apparent. "The Russian steam-roller of 1914 has disappeared," as a witty M.P. has said, "but the man with the Red Flag is there." The great Allied Power, which the British Prime Minister said was "not a quitter," has been forced to a separate peace. The future of this great nation, with its still vast territories and virile people, can hardly be forecast. The duty of

Russia's old Allies is to understand the facts, which many have wilfully or carelessly disregarded, and to show such sympathy and support as may hasten her recovery. Foremost among the facts of the situation is that after, if not before, the Revolution there was reached the stage of

Hopelessness of Continued Warfare.

Russia was incapable of further military effort. Lenin's reasoned statement, on February 24, 1918, set out in clear terms that Russia having accepted a Socialist Government "must pass through a period of civil war and internal disorder," "must concentrate all her forces on the internal struggle," accepting then "the improbability of the outbreak of Social Revolution in the rest of Europe," it was not "treason to International Socialism to sign a peace with the German Imperialists." "When workmen are beaten in a strike they only accept bad conditions in order to prepare for another struggle later." "If the Russian Revolution continued the war in alliance with Anglo-French Imperialism on the basis of the old Secret Treaties recently published and not openly repudiated by the Allies, then it would be prostituting itself to foreign Imperialists." This statement of the position from Lenin's point of view ended thus: "Russia, if she has peace, can become the envy of all lands and the centre of gravity of the Social World. She can concentrate on the internal development of the Russian Revolution. If she attempts to reap the full fruits of the Revolution and to carry on the war against foreign imperialism, she will lose both her objects. If she concentrates on internal development now, she will secure her second victory later." These views and aims have carried the Soviet, though Trotsky, still ready to fight on, has resigned his post. Russia has ceased to be a great Power because she has turned to an international Socialism. She was only to be saved from this course, and from all the horrors and humiliations going with it, if the Allies had accepted with prompt wholeheartedness the course to which Kerensky had invited them in vain.

The Secret Treaties Divulged

by the Bolsheviki were made public as part of their war against Imperialism and existing methods of government! Milhiukof in May, 1917, and Kerensky later, had spoken of the secret documents in the archives of the dethroned Russian Government. From November, 1917, onwards various documents showing the secret diplomacy of the Allies in the war have been published, producing controversies and new diplomatic developments.* Those,

*Those who wish to study the text of these documents are recommended to read a book issued by the Union of Democratic Control, 4-7, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4., entitled, "The Secret Treaties and Understandings," which contains explanatory notes by F. Seymour Cocks, a Preface by Charles Trevelyan, M.P., and two maps. Its price is 2s. 6d.

who hold that if this war be a fight for democracy the people should know for what they are fighting, are grateful for these disclosures, however much on economic or other grounds Bolsheviki policy may repel them. By these publications, as well as in their whole policy and in holding together so strongly the working masses of Russia, and in spite of whatever mistakes and failures can be charged against them, the Russian Bolsheviks have helped to secure the

End of Autocracy and the Old Diplomacy.

The downfall has been proclaimed by no less an authority than Dr. E. J. Dillon, the famous Foreign Correspondent, who has had an unique experience of diplomatic affairs in many lands, and has talked to so many monarchs and Ministers of so many States. He promises shortly a book dealing with the Russian Revolution, which will "sound the death knell of Autocracy and the Old Diplomacy." No sympathy with Bolshevism, pacifism, or socialism can be imputed to him. The revolutionaries can cite him in their defence.

A question has been raised (in March, 1917) whether the Czar himself remained loyal to the Allied cause when the revolution overwhelmed him. Sir George Buchanan and Gustav Hervé have asserted his personal loyalty. Dr. Dillon and others are as convinced of his duplicity. The question is only of small importance. The Czar personally was not a strong character; his wife and Court influences moulded him to their stronger wills. Even if he were personally loyal, he was not passionately loyal; his loyalty, if granted, was not effective. In the remote possibility of imperialistic and capitalistic forces or a reactionary régime trying to restore him to his throne, he would be only a puppet Czar.

The Lost Territories of Russia

are a warning to those who cherish Imperialistic ambitions. Only three years ago the Russian Czar was not content with ruling one-sixth of the land surface of the globe and with being despot of 170 million subjects. He planned to enlarge his dominions by adding the divided parts of Poland under his autocracy. In this aim he received the blessing and good wishes of Republican France and Constitutional Britain. His Allies were ready to win Constantinople for him, even while his own armies retreated before the enemy, and to turn the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora into Russian Lakes. Even Liberals in the British Parliament believed that the prolonged agony of Armenia would end if Russian armies advanced into Asia Minor, and if the rule of the autocrat brought liberty to those long persecuted by the Sultan. Vain were such hopes! Russia to-day has been bereft of Finland, whose independent Republican Government is recognised both by Germany and France. The Ukraine (Little Russia), the south-western portion of Russia in Europe, the land of the black earth which grows abundant grain, has also

declared her independence. Finland and Ukraine alike have made separate peace treaties with the German Alliance; in each land German soldiers are suppressing the Bolshevik Soviets in the name of law and order. Finland is being fed with supplies of German grain; Ukraine will transfer such surplus as she has or can produce to feed her recent foe. On the Black Sea, Bessarabia, inhabited by a Roumanian population, will be torn from Russia and given to Roumania to balance those Roumanian regions now handed over to Hungary and Bulgaria. To Russian Poland there has been granted by Germany a Polish Council, more representative and with greater liberties than even the Czar proposed to give her; the hopes of the Poles for larger national rights and union with their fellow Poles are now founded on enlarging the concessions already made by the Germans. The Russian Baltic Provinces, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia and Esthonia are ceded to Germany, who vaguely promises them "social security" and political order. The Baltic has no longer any Russian Coast; the Black Sea, with the provinces of Batoum and Kars, added to Turkey, becomes a Mittel-Europa Lake. The Murman Coast, with its distant shores and Arctic climate, and Archangel, ice-bound for five months in the year, remain the sole direct access of Russia to the Western Seas. Was it in irony that the peace terms imposed on Russia left her Fleet still in her hands with no ports or bases for them?

Japan and Siberia

may soon be the scene of a new phase of the world's war. As soon as the collapse of Russia before Germany was clear, voices were raised, in France first, then in Britain, later from all quarters, calling for Japan to move into Siberia. The excuse and reasons for this proposal to intervene were not hard to find. To have Japanese overrunning the East of Russia, as the Germans are invading the West appeared a counter-stroke against the success of German militarism. It was said that Japanese stores were lying unpaid for by Russia, at Vladivostock; that German prisoners in Siberia were being armed and drilled to support Germany; and that Germany would soon have the minerals of the Ural Mountains. It was even said that Japanese troops could soon cover the 7,500 miles to the West, meet the German foe, and prevent his conquest or penetration of Russia. And so forth! Whatever be the outcome of this menace to Russia from her late Ally, even if Japan invades Russia, and her invasion is not approved by the Allies, men in every land will be disgusted at this cynical invasion. Men will ask how those who took arms at the outrage of violated Belgium can engage in such an attack on Russia.

Is Russia an Outcast among Nations?

This is what M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, says of Russia. What is seen to-day is the Embassies of her late Allies

leaving Petrograd; the refusal of the British and French Governments to receive Russian representatives; the callous treatment of Russia by her conqueror even after Russia has accepted a cruel peace; and Japan encouraged to come in and take all that she can of what is left of Russia, her enemy of thirteen years ago, her ally of yesterday. At the moment when she enters on her second year of Revolutionary life Russia stands apart, a figure now lonely, but not (let it be hoped) outcast for long among the nations.

VI.

THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLUTION

is beyond the power of any to forecast. Whether the Bolschevik Government can last; what will replace it if it fall; whether some monarchy, constitutional or autocratic, will be imposed on or accepted by the Russian nation; whether the present frontiers may suffer speedy change; whether a republic, or federation of republics, will become a stable form of government—these are all questions to ask, and then—wait and see.

Character

the Russians certainly have—the moral force of Tolstoy, the strong type of peasant character revealed by the writings of both Russian and English authors, and the deep religious vein in the race come up in the firm determination and ruthless logic of such men as Kerensky, Lenin, and Trotsky. Character is not denied to this race—character will produce great leaders. Indeed, already in Russia war time has discovered undoubted great leaders of men in Army and in State.

Intellect

of a peculiarly intense and severe type, with marked power of closest concentration, is common in Russia. It is a quality seen in their scientific and artistic geniuses. The peculiar gifts of character and intellect in Russia must with freer conditions produce men of leadership and originality.

Natural Resources

Russia has in such abundance, especially timber, metals, coal, grain and oils. Grain and cattle, wool and cotton, oil and fruit she can produce from her varied climates. She has wealth enough for her own use as well as to attract her neighbours to trade and enterprise.

Generous Sympathy due to Russia

must cause both fears and hopes. Russia is not yet played out. She is a young and vigorous giant, inexperienced and undisciplined, relying more on the inspiration of the future and of new ideals than (like Greeks and Portuguese) on the memory and pride of past greatness. Sir Paul Vinogradof, the Oxford professor and Russian politician, has issued a warning not only against the wickedness and folly of sending Japan in to complete the humiliation and spoliation of his country, but also against the British Press which now would "bully and blackguard" the Revolution. President Wilson has sent a generous message of sympathy to the nation forced to accept a separate German peace. Mr. Arthur Henderson, leader of British Labour politics, warns against the desertion of Russia. Chivalry and interest alike demand for the fallen Ally patience, sympathy, and generous support.

The Russian Revolution has only just Begun.

It will last and live, will change and surprise its elders. Like a child, it needs patience, sympathy, understanding and direction, and, like a child, it is destined to grow and become strong.



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